

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 18, 2002

The Honorable John P. Walters  
Director  
Office of National Drug Control Policy  
750 17<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Walters:

As members of the 89 member, bi-partisan Congressional Caucus to Fight and Control Methamphetamine, we are writing to show our support for the Office of National Drug Control Policy's drug strategy, and to share our views of important issues that should be addressed when planning future drug policies.

We ask that when crafting future drug policy, a greater focus is placed on the drug methamphetamine. Methamphetamine is quickly becoming one of the most dangerous drugs in the United States. Production nationwide continues to skyrocket. For example, in 2001, 9735 labs were discovered - up from 3,327 labs in 1997. In addition, drug treatment admissions for meth use have increased over 600 percent in the past seven years. The Partnership for a Drug Free America monitors drug-related behavior and attitudes among children, teens, and parents. The November 2000 survey of 7,290 teens revealed that within their lifetime, 40 percent of teens have used marijuana; 21 percent have used inhalants; 12 percent have used LSD; 11 percent have used methamphetamine; and 10 percent used MDMA. This statistic should cause great concern as it shows that highly addictive methamphetamine has become a mainstream drug.

Methamphetamine permeates into virtually every aspect of life. Although drug dealers and addicts are primarily affected by this drug, meth has devastating consequences that reach far beyond these individuals. Families and communities are also torn apart due to this illicit drug. Meth use often leads to other crimes such as domestic violence, child abuse, and theft. In addition, meth has dangerous impacts on the environment. Methamphetamine production leaves behind five to six pounds of toxic waste per pound of methamphetamine produced. Meth lab investigations require special health and haz-mat procedures and specially trained investigative personnel to collect and handle evidence seized.

In crafting future drug policy, please find our recommendations below.

## **Law Enforcement**

- Adopt a national database system to share meth related information.
- Assist states to develop state-specific clandestine drug laboratory training.
- Encourage states to develop a statewide commission that creates and directs strategy against methamphetamine.
- Work with Canada and Mexico to stem the flow of precursors into the United States.
- Institute measures that would reduce the amount of pseudoephedrine available for sale to consumers and/or institute better monitoring of individuals that purchase above average amounts of pseudoephedrine.
- Increase the penalties of amphetamine possession to mirror those of methamphetamine.

- Coordinate all aspects of meth data including societal and cost data, drug use data, public health data, and crime data to educate and motivate the community to take action and support coordinated efforts against meth.
- Create a national speakers bureau to educate administrators and policy makers on the complexity of the meth problem and cost involved.
- Educate judges, prosecutors and state officials on methamphetamine.
- Encourage law enforcement to report labs to El-Paso Intelligence Center.

#### **Environment**

- Recommend law enforcement to notify the proper agencies if they have found a meth lab.
- Provide science based criteria on how to safely respond to meth lab sites.
- Expand and create new penalties for harm to the environment and harm to human life through the production of meth.

#### **Prevention**

- Devote specific accounts to "meth prevention" education rather than a more broad "drug prevention" education.
- Encourage states to integrate meth education for both students and parents into anti-drug education classes.

#### **Treatment**

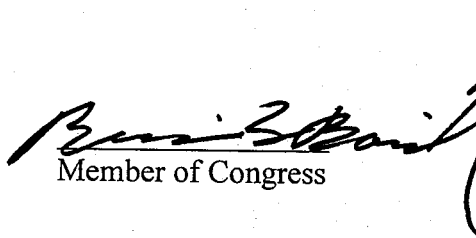
- Make funds within Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Block Grant available for the primary purpose of providing services for individuals with substance abuse problems. Make some of those funds available specifically for methamphetamine addicts.
- Make both local municipalities and states eligible for SAMHSA grants.

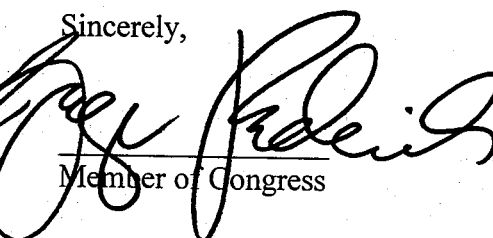
#### **Child Welfare**

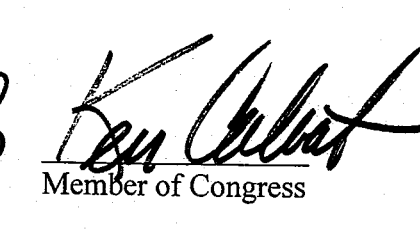
- Encourage State leadership to work with law enforcement to collaboratively establish methods to respond to meth labs and ensure child safety.
- Establish a study of health effects of children who have been exposed to meth labs.

We appreciate your attention to our suggestions. If you or your staff have any questions or require additional information, please contact Kate Sinner, at Representative Baird's office at 5-3536.

Sincerely,

  
Member of Congress

  
Member of Congress

  
Member of Congress

  
Member of Congress